

The Application Process

The College Application

While the counselors and College Career Center staff are here to support JHHS seniors with the application process, it is the **STUDENT** who is responsible for knowing which application materials are required for each college and submitting all applications, fees, essays, official test scores, and supplemental materials. An application generally consists of the following:

Required materials:

- ✓ The application itself (paper or online)
- ✓ Application fee or fee waiver
- ✓ Transcript
- ✓ Official test scores (ACT or SAT)

Supplementary materials required by some colleges:

- ✓ Secondary School Report or Counselor Form
- ✓ Teacher or counselor recommendations
- ✓ Activities Resume
- ✓ Interview

The Application

Most colleges have their own applications found on the admissions tab of their website. Some colleges also accept the Common Application or Coalition Application, applications shared by multiple schools. There are over 700 colleges and universities that accept the “Common Application”. Students applying to two or more Common Application Schools can fill out the Common Application one time and use it for multiple colleges. For a complete list of Common Application Schools, visit the website: www.commonapp.org. In the fall of 2016, the Coalition Application was introduced. In its first year, this shared application had relatively few members but we expect the 2017-18 year to grow significantly. We recommend students use this shared application over school applications only if a student has multiple schools accepting the Coalition. You will find a list of Coalition members at: www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/.

Regardless of the type of application you file, please:



- Add your colleges to the Naviance “Colleges I’m Applying to” as a senior and select the type of application you will use.
- Make a careful list of the materials required to complete the application, such as transcripts, test scores or counselor recommendations. Be sure to request these supplemental materials with plenty of time for them to be completed and sent by the application deadline date.
 - Fill out the application carefully and completely. If you are working online, save your application regularly, so you do not lose your work.
- Be sure to submit ALL materials by the deadline date.

Application Fee or Fee Waiver

Most applications require a fee with the application. If you file electronically, you may need to provide a credit card payment. Students eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch or public assistance may have application fees waived. Stop by the College Career Center (CCC) for the fee waiver application.

Transcript

Most college applications require a student's official transcript sent directly from the high school's Registrar. You will have the chance to review and approve your transcript at the start of senior year. Once approved you can request transcripts through Parchment. At peak periods it can take weeks to process requests. Please allow at least three weeks for a transcript to be sent.

Official Test Scores

John Hersey High School does not send standardized test scores or include them on the transcript. It is the student's responsibility to send official test scores to colleges directly from the testing services. At the time of registration for the ACT, SAT, or SAT Subject Tests, you may specify up to four colleges to receive your scores as part of your test registration fee. After the test is taken, you can request to send ACT or SAT score reports to additional schools at a cost of \$12 per school through the websites:

For ACT: www.actstudent.org
For SAT or SAT Subject Tests: www.collegeboard.com

Students eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch or public assistance may be eligible for a fee waiver when sending certain scores. Stop by either the College Career Center or Assessment Office for more information about fee waivers.

When reporting ACT scores, you can choose to submit test scores from a specific testing date or submit all of your test scores. Students are sometimes tempted to send only their tests with the highest composite scores. However, some selective schools require ALL scores to be sent. Other colleges use the highest test score when multiple scores have been sent. And other colleges combine the highest sub scores from multiple tests to compute a higher composite score, known as a "superscore". For these reasons, it may be a good idea for students to send ALL test scores. Check with each college to determine their policy.

Teacher Recommendations

Many colleges do not require teacher recommendations and will not read them if sent. For other colleges, these are an essential part of the application. You will know if a letter of recommendation is required if it is asked for within your application. ***Here is how to request a teacher recommendation:***

Select a teacher of a core academic subject or class related to your career interest. Colleges prefer Junior or Senior year teachers. It is best if the teacher knows you very well as a student – your interests, abilities and motivation.

Ask the teacher in person if they can honestly give you a positive recommendation. You can ask one teacher to provide a recommendation for multiple schools. If they hesitate or have reservations, ask someone else.

After talking with the teacher, request the letter of recommendation in your college application, by entering the name and email address for your teacher. The teacher will receive an email invitation with instructions on sending letters. If the application does not ask for a teacher recommendation, it is not required and will not be read.

Ask the teacher what they need to write you a letter or recommendation. They may interview you or ask you to complete a JHHS Teacher Brag Sheet to remind them of your academic strengths, interests, and future plans. This form is available in the College Career Center.

Colleges look most favorably on recommendations where you waived the right to review (i.e., the letter is sent to the college directly from the person writing). Be sure to waive your right to review recommendation letters.

Allow at least 15 school days for a teacher/counselor to write your letter.

Secondary School Report, Counselor Form or Recommendation

Your application may require a Secondary School Report, Counselor Form, or letter of recommendation (rec) from your counselor. If the application requires counselor materials, complete the Counselor Rec Survey in Naviance **FIRST**. Once this survey is complete, follow the instructions within your college application to invite your counselor to prepare application materials on your behalf. Usually, these are email invitations. Please remember to waive your right to review these letters and allow at least 15 school days for your counselor to write a good letter of recommendation.

Personal Statement or Essays

Not all colleges require essays, but when a college does, it is an important part of the admissions application. The essay or personal statement allows colleges to see how well you communicate and, more importantly, allows them to see you as an individual. For this reason, there is no one formula for writing a good essay. Instead view this as your chance to communicate your personality, character, feelings, motivations, strengths, and passions. Honesty, self-awareness, and creativity are all elements of a strong essay.

Questions will vary widely from college to college, so plan to spend some time considering essay topics, drafting and editing your essay. The summer before senior year is a great time to work on your college essay. It is best to have a draft of your essay completed by the time you return to school. *Some key things to keep in mind:*



- Use the essay to express your uniqueness. Do not include information already listed on the application or transcript.
- Follow the directions! Answer the question asked. If there is a limit on the number of words, adhere to the limit.
- Use a style that is comfortable to you, using your own words and style. Be careful not to have others over-edit your essays or your essay may lose your voice.
- Use correct grammar, punctuation and spelling. Have your essays proofread by your family, teachers or tutors in the Writing Well.

Activities Resume

An activities resume is a brief, easy-to-read, summary of your after school activities, honors, community service and work experience. In some cases, the resume can be used in lieu of completing the activity section on a college application. Other schools only recommend attaching your resume when the application does not provide enough space for you to list a description of your activities and experiences in detail. Other schools **require** that you complete the activities section of the application, so please read the instructions carefully!

Resume Writing Tips:

List your information in reverse chronological order with the recent items first.

Organize your activities into categories (e.g. Athletics, Clubs, Awards, Work Experience, etc.)

Try to keep the resume to one page.

Appearance is very important. Use blank space, font size, bold, italic and underline features, and indent or tab features to create an outline effect. You can use the resume-writing feature in Naviance to help you with formatting.

Be sure to proofread for errors.

Sample Activities Resume

John P. Senior
12345 Main Street
Arlington Heights, IL 60004
(847) 555-1212
JSenior7890@stu.d214.org

Education:

John Hersey High School
1900 East Thomas Street
Arlington Heights, IL 60004

Class of 2019

G.P.A.: 4.8/5.0
ACT: English 26, Math 22, Reading 24, Science 23, Composite 24

School Activities:

Soccer:
Team Captain Grades 12
Most Valuable Player Grades 11,12
Varsity Grades 10,11,12
Junior Varsity Grade 9

Service Over Self:
Thanksgiving food drive, Chair Grade 10
Club Member: Chess Team Grade 9 - 11

Volunteer Service:

Northwest Community Hospital Volunteer Grades 11, 12
(4 hrs/week)
Church - Youth Group Grades 9 -12
(2 hrs/week)

Work History:

Target, Cashier 06/2018 - present
(8 hours/week)
Arlington Hts Park District, Lifeguard 06/2017-08/2017
(40 hours/week in summers)

Summer Programs:

Northwestern University Summer Enrichment Summer 2016

Awards:

Academic Honor Roll Grades 9 - 11
National Honor Society Grades 11-12
Illinois State Scholar Grade 12

Interviews

The interview is used in the admission process at some colleges. If an interview is *required* or *recommended*, it can be a significant factor in the admissions decision. Interviews may be conducted by a representative of the admission staff or by an alumni living in your community. The interview is an opportunity for you to highlight your uniqueness, personality, and what you can bring to the college. A few interview tips are listed below, but you can also ask Mrs. Davis to conduct a mock interview to prepare you for this process.

Make a good first impression. Dress neatly, be punctual, and shake hands initially and at the end of the interview. Make eye contact and listen attentively.

Be prepared. Consult the college's materials or website so that you can ask appropriate questions and express your interest in the school.

Show genuine interest and enthusiasm for the college.

Thank the interviewer for his/her time and ask for business card or contact information. Follow up with a thank you note.

NCAA and College Athletics

NCAA

The NCAA, or National Collegiate Athletic Association, was established in 1906 and is the athletics governing body for more than 1200 colleges, universities, conferences and organizations. NCAA schools are divided into three divisions. Division I and II members may offer athletics scholarships, while Division III schools may not. For more information, visit www.ncaaeligibilitycenter.org.



NAIA

The NAIA, or National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, founded in 1937, includes nearly 250 smaller colleges. A list of these colleges may be found at www.naia.org. Over 90% of NAIA colleges offer athletic scholarships.

All students who want to become either NCAA or NAIA athletes should attend the D214 Student Athlete Night in November and read the D214 Student-Athlete Handbook. These resources have valuable information about the recruitment and application process.

Special Education College Programs

There are many colleges that are able to serve students with special needs. The range of services and associated costs vary widely. Students should work closely with their case manager and college counselor as they begin planning for college to determine the specific needs of the student and each college or university's ability to provide these services. Students may want their IEP, 504, or other documentation made available to their chosen college. The College Career Center staff can guide them on how and when to advise each school. Special accommodations for ACT and SAT testing need to be arranged well in advance of the test date. Students looking for Special Education College Programs are encouraged to explore the JHHS website for students with special needs: <http://jhhs.d214.org/students/special-needs-resources/> and attend the District 214 Directions College Fair in the fall.